

## THE QUESTION OF PRISON LABOR.

Serious Inroads Are Being Made on the Products of the Free Working People of the Country.

### ROBS THEM OF CHANCE TO MAKE AN HONEST LIVING

Should the Honest Toiler Be Made to Suffer That the Convict May Have Employment Is the Vital Question of the Hour—Must Be Settled In Our Legislative Halls.

The question of the competition of convict labor and its effects on the free workingman outside prison walls has long been the subject of discourse among members of labor organizations, and the universal consensus of opinion has been that the convicts of the various States, instead of being employed at the trades which conflict with honest labor, should be employed upon the public roads, thereby competing with nobody and producing results for the general good.

In recent years the question has been brought closer to home, and in the numerous newspaper reports of the excellent management of the various penal institutions of the country have shown considerable profit over and above the cost of their maintenance, there has been proven to the worker that a dangerous line of competition exists and that the seeming profit has been at his or her expense.

It is an impossible theory that freemen can compete with convicts in the matter of labor, for the very simple reason that, freemen cannot and will not live as convicts. Even the great and gruesome indiscriminate immigration evil pales into insignificance beside this growing wrong. The twelfth annual report of Commissioner of Labor Charles P. Neill, just issued at Washington, deals largely with this hydra-headed evil, and shows conclusively to what an extent prison labor is wronging the free worker and robbing him of the chances of making an honest living.

The report bristles with tables of figures, giving the number of convicts, their costs, the value of their output, etc. But as these figures are all several years old, being the figures for the fiscal year 1904, they should at this time be unprofitable, because, to any student of the subject of the baneful influence of convict labor, later figures are easily available. But the general deductions drawn by the agents of the Bureau of Labor are worthy of consideration.

The report is frank. It says that manufacturers agree in considering convict labor as an unfair and ruinous competition, demoralizing the markets and business stability, compelling the reduction of prices below a fair margin of profit and often even below the cost of production. Wages, it is stated, are forced to the lowest limit in a vain effort to lower the cost of production to that of the prison contractor. In some cases a deterioration of quality of material used, and in others an entire abandonment to the prisons of the manufacture of certain grades of goods became necessary.

"The greatest objection, however, to the employment of convict labor is that it ordinarily displaces inexperienced and unorganized labor; that is, that class of poor people who are unable to leave their homes to enter factories, or cannot absent themselves a definite period, but who, nevertheless, require for their sustenance the slight amount of money that they might be able to earn while remaining at home, and between the intervals of household work, nursing, etc., can make a little money that will materially benefit their existence.

"The facts operate in an entirely unexpected manner, inasmuch as the employment of convict labor creates a demand for goods that are not producible by the inexperienced sewing-machine operators, and this has worked a terrific hardship against that class of laborers which belong to the lowest class of wage-earners and who are deserving the greatest consideration, being made up principally of widows, orphans and other helpless individuals who have not had the opportunity to better themselves, and who, by birth and education, are without the inclination to do so.

It is believed that the only way

to curb this competition will be to compel all convict products to be stamped "Convict-made." In some States this has already been done; in other States the products of the prisons is not for sale, but is kept exclusively for the use of the State in its prisons. Other States forbid the sale of convict goods.

### FAVORABLE OUTLOOK

For the Thorough Organization of the Mine Workers of This State.

Ben Davis, West Virginia's member of the National Executive Board, of the United Mine Workers of America, is back from Indianapolis, where he attended an important meeting of the Board, and he is highly elated over the fact that considerable time and attention was devoted to the situation in West Virginia.

Mr. Davis says that the outlook in this State is brighter than ever before for the organizing of the coal fields in every section of the State and predicts that before any great length of time that practically every miner in West Virginia will be a member of the organization and working under the joint agreement.

This will certainly be welcome news to the organized men and they should do everything in their power to assist their officers in bringing about these conditions.

### QUACK MEDICINE

Which Result In Untold Evil Is a Substantiation of

Organized Labor's Demand for Legislation for the Protection of the Masses.

The revelations made by Upton Sinclair, in "The Jungle," about the unspeakable filthiness of the packing houses in Chicago and elsewhere, the adulteration and poisoning of the food product of the nation, and the corrupting influences of these corporations, seems to have its counterpart in many other industries. The health and lives of the people are being sacrificed every day in order that and dividends may be obtained. More revolting than the revelations made in reference to the packing house industry are the investigations made by Collier's Weekly touching on the manufacture of patent medicines, products which it would be naturally supposed would require carefulness in manufacture, and freedom from poisons, at least. Read what the Collier's Weekly, in its issue of April 28, 1906, has to say about the Chamberlain products, manufactured by the Chamberlain Medicine Company, Des Moines, Iowa:

Vancouver, British Columbia, is stirred up over the death of the infant son of William Duncan from opium poisoning after taking "Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy." The Vancouver World, exhibiting an independence which many much more important newspapers lack when dealing with proprietary medicines, printed the facts in the case, and the coroner's verdict that death was due to a dose of "quack medicine known as 'Chamberlain's Diarrhoea Cure,' the said dose being given to the child in ignorance of the fact that it contained opium." Immediately the Chamberlain Company sent to the Vancouver World an elaborate "defense," accompanying it with an order for a certain amount of advertising. The advertising was "turned down" for the reasons thus made clear in the editorial

columns of the newspaper: "The World is reaching out for business, but not the skull and cross-bones business that follows in the train of a Chamberlain Medicine Advertisement."

Having found the persuasive influence of money unavailing, the quack medicine concern adopted the Proprietary Association's alternative method of dealing with a newspaper, intimidation. It sued the World for libel. The result must have convinced the Chamberlain people that they had caught a Tartar, for the newspaper instead of being silenced, took the lead in demanding legislation for the control of patent medicine poisons, inaugurating a movement that bids fair to be successful.

It is hardly necessary to add that the above concern is one of the champions of the so-called "open shop" policy.

### OFF FOR CONVENTION

Is Charleston Typographical Union's Representative to Colorado Springs

Alvin L. Snyder, Charleston Typographical Union's representative to the Fifty-second Convention of the International Typographical Union, to be held at Colorado Springs from August 13th to 18th, left over the C. & O., on Tuesday morning.

This is the greatest trip that has ever fallen to the lot of a delegate

from this union, as in addition to the picturesque grandeur of the trip, the International Printers' Home, one of the greatest institutions in the world, is located at that place, and it will be by far the most important meeting of the International ever held in its history, and will be composed of the brainiest men in the Typographical Union in the United States, its foreign possessions and Canada.

The most important feature of the Convention will be in regard to the eight-hour strike which is on in various parts of the country. It is a foregone conclusion, however, that the strike will only last a short time after the adjournment of the convention, as it is a well known fact that the membership will stand by the I. T. U. officers in their grand fight against the United Typothetae of America, and will appropriate the necessary funds to wipe the open-shop policy of the Typothetae out of existence.

He laughs at sears who never had appendicitis.

### Is Again Sustained.

The Supreme Court of Washington has declared the eight hour law of that state constitutional. The law was enacted in 1899. A local court upheld the law, the Supreme court annulled it, and now the Supreme court sustains the law.

The rolling stone generally gathers remorse.

## MONSTER LABOR MASS MEETING

To Be Held at Trades Assembly Hall on Monday Evening, August the Thirteenth.

### MATTERS OF GRAVE IMPORTANCE TO BE DISCUSSED.

Every Laboring Man In the City Requested to be Present—Frank L. Rice, of Iowa, and Thomas Cairnes, of Ohio, and Others Will Make Addresses—Time Has Come for Labor to Act.

A monster mass meeting of the laboring men of Charleston and vicinity will be held at Trades Assembly Hall on Monday evening, August 13th.

Matters of grave importance to every wage worker, both organized and unorganized will be discussed, and no laboring man who has the interest of himself and family at heart should be absent.

Frank L. Rice, of Iowa, one of the most able and eloquent labor speakers in the country, for years general organizer of the American Federation of Labor and the United Mine Workers of America, will address the meeting, as will also National Organizer, Thos. Cairnes, of Ohio, and others.

The workmen of this section who desire to better their conditions and that of their fellow men are earnestly requested to lend their assistance toward making the meeting a success.

The committee in charge of the meeting were appointed by the general Labor Day Committee on Sunday afternoon and are hard at work making the necessary arrangements for the successful culmination of the meeting and extend an especial invitation to the unorganized workers of our city, regardless of politics, religion or nationality.

### THE TRADES-UNION

As Reviewed By Rev. Dr. Washington Gladden.

The Congregationalist contains a lengthy paper by the Rev. Dr. Washington Gladden, entitled "My Neighbor the Unionist."

The author takes positive and strong ground in favor of labor unions, holding that they are not only an indisputable right of the workmen, but that they are the only means by which the laboring classes can escape being enslaved or degraded, and that they protect their own interests, secure fair hours of labor and proper remuneration and fix their social status in accordance with the best ideals and habits of the age.

From this standpoint Dr. Gladden urges all employers to welcome and co-operate with the trades-unions.

"Perhaps," says Dr. Gladden, "you will say that some trades-unions sometimes behave like criminals and endanger the peace and welfare of society. That is true. It is also true of ministers of the Gospel, of capitalists, of

day afternoon and are hard at work making the necessary arrangements for the successful culmination of the meeting and extend an especial invitation to the unorganized workers of our city, regardless of politics, religion or nationality.

The object of the meeting is to get all the toilers of this city together and discuss the great crisis that is rapidly approaching and which will affect the homes of all and which, if to be averted, must be done by the concerted action of all and every man who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow must do his part, as the time for shirking our duty is past.

Hearken, ye workers, to the call of duty! The appointed time has arrived for action! Let us all pull together for the good of the working masses and Greater Charleston.

Monday evening, August 13th, 1906, at 7:30 o'clock, at Assembly Hall on Capitol street, entrance between the Hub Clothing Store and Mideburg's Jewelry Store.

members of great corporations, but that is no reason why we should regard capitalists or members of great corporations as a class of public enemies. There is a great deal of this sweeping judgment on both sides of the labor controversy, and it is wholly wrong and mischievous.

"Sometimes you say that you do not object to trades-unions if they keep within their legitimate province; if they do not meddle with what is none of their business. What you mean is that you do not object to the beneficial and social features of the unions and would be glad to encourage them, but you do not approve of their attempts to regulate wages or hours or conditions of labor. These, you think, should be determined by the employer.

"Your neighbor, the unionist, as such, is doing what he has a perfect right to do and is bound to do—what you would do if you were in his place."

The eight hour work day must be universal. Aim for that goal.

Elect trades-unionists to the positions of honor and trust. They are capable; they are faithful.

## SIBERIA OF THE UNITED STATES

The Michigan Ore Miners Take Their Lives in Their Hands When They Enter The Shafts.

### STAND IN WATER FROM 9 TO 11 HOURS PER DAY.

They Become Old and Worn Out After Five Years of Toil Underground and Their Children Grow Up in Ignorance and Poverty Only to Follow in their Footsteps—A Life of Drudgery.

Isaac Cowen, who has been on a speaking tour through the West, submits the following interesting observations:

The miners in Michigan who go down into deep and dangerous shafts for iron ore surely take their health and their lives in their hands. They stand and work in water from nine to eleven hours for the pittance of \$1.80 to \$2.22 per day. Frequently it is a question of jump or drown with many of them, for when the pumps get out of working order there must be a hasty retreat for open ground, with the chances greatly against the men.

The miners in this country are old at 38 and very old at 45. The land for miles around the mines is owned or leased by the great steel trust and even the towns as well—by the fat gentleman who never saw the inside of the mines, but who clip coupons, regularly and take from the miners the greater portion of the wealth they produce.

The copper mines are simply terrible. Men become aged and worn out in two to five years of toil, especially those who are compelled to fill cars at the bottom of the shafts. This work is so severe that even the strongest are barely able to stand the dreadful strain for more than three years.

The country around is bare and rocky and there is little vegetation or grain of any kind. To reach this part of Michigan, one has to travel through miles of forest and half-cleared country, full of stumps, the relics of the story of swindlers who robbed the land or perhaps bought it from the government for a mere song and robbed it of the fine timber, dodged taxes and became millionaires and great politicians.

The shacks, huts or cabins that the miners live or exist in would furnish material for a "jungle" story founded on real life or slow death, according to the point of view, and one naturally asks: "Are these poor men, women and children, who produce one of civilization's greatest necessities—ore—to be consigned to a living death until real death relieves them of the terrible travail, without hope of sunshine and joy here and with hell's fire in store for them in eternity if some of the sanctimonious preachers have their way?"

The great modern tools of production have reached this Siberia of America. In every direction you can see the labor-displacing machinery manipulated by one-tenth or even one-fifteenth of human labor formerly required. Perhaps it is a god-send to those who are driven out of employment. They are kept on the starvation line when at work, and they cannot be much worse off while slaving their lives away for a few greedy plutocrats.

The children are, of course, kept in ignorance, just what the vamps of the system want, so that they can depend upon a rising generation of docile wage slaves. Capitalism looks ahead and plans to keep its progeny in control of the means of production and distribution, and unfortunately the toilers still acquiesce with their ballots.

### MACHINE RULE

Receives Its Death Blow in the Great State of Maine.

Machine rule has received its death blow in Maine. Through the questioning of candidates for the initiative and referendum by the State Grange, State Federation of Labor and the State Referendum League, the Republican State Convention declared for a constitutional amendment for the initiative

and referendum law and further declared:

"We recommend to the consideration of the next legislature the adoption of statutes under which all nominations for elective offices by the political parties entitled to representation of the official ballot shall be by direct vote of the people at the primary elections under all the safe-guards of the regular election itself."

Previous to these declarations by the Republican machine the Democratic State Convention declared for the initiative and referendum.

Thus the people of Maine are assured of the re-establishment of their sovereignty. Machine rule—the rule of few through the convention system—is to be laid aside. In the words of the politician who wrote the foregoing Republican plank, "Delegate conventions have ceased to be satisfactory."

How long before the people of this state will reach the same conclusion?

The man who is not ashamed to tell you that he believes that you have rights that should be respected; that he has rights that should be respected, and now that the smoke has cleared away there is no reasonable excuse for not showing us by little emblem that adorns the establishment or article that employs union labor. We are from Missouri, and we want to be shown.

### LABOR'S HOLIDAY

Preparations For a Fitting Celebration About Completed.

Everything Points to the Greatest Demonstration that Charleston Ever Witnessed.

At the meeting of the general Labor Day committee at Assembly Hall on Sunday afternoon the various sub-committees reported that they had about completed their labors and would be ready to make their final reports in a short time.

The majority of the local unions have decided on their marching uniforms for the occasion and a number of them have placed their orders. Every union in the city will participate, and an invitation has been extended to every local in the Kanawha Valley to do likewise, and in all probability a number of them will do so.

So far three brass bands have been engaged and negotiations are pending for several others.

The names of the speakers of the day will be given out just as soon as a definite reply is received from President Samuel Gompers, of the A. F. of L.

Nearly every business firm in the city have signified their intention to participate in the big trades-display and industrial parade with a float representing their business, which insures the greatest parade that ever took place in West Virginia.

Advices from all points in this section indicate that there will be double the number of visitors here than attended the celebration of two years ago.

It will be a great day in honor of a great cause.

### Labor Briefs.

Defeat Labor's enemies. A union man's pride is his clear card.

Demand union labeled products always.

A workman to be a man must be a union man.

Stand firmly by your union and the great cause of labor.